However, the Government is making all-out efforts to coordinate with these agencies for providing improved city connectivity to the airports. For this purpose, Government of India have constituted a Task Force under the Chairmanship of Member, Planning Commission to finalise a plan for improved city connectivity of selected airports in consultation with the respective State Governments. The respective State Governments, from time to time, undertake/plan various measures such as widening of Highways, construction of High Speed Express Rail link from City Centre to the airports, etc., as per requirement.

Assistance of foreign aviation authorities

729. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to take the assistance of foreign aviation authorities to ensure its airline and airports to meet all safety norms;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the existing safety and security measures taken by Government at airports are neither sufficient nor as per international safety norms; and

(d) if so, how Government is going to implement international safety norms at airports in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) has offered to run National Projects in the areas of flight safety, aerodromes and air navigation services in order to address the findings of the audit conducted by ICAO in October 2006 under their Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme. These National Projects will augment the existing strength of DGCA by hiring experts (international/national) to assist DGCA in discharging its regulatory and safety oversight functions, till regular technical staff are recruited and trained by the Government. A plan outlay of Rs. 2.00 crore has been estimated during the year 2009-10 for the National Projects of ICAO.

(c) and (d) The existing security measures at the airports are sufficient and are as per standards of Annex-17 of ICAO. However, ICAO has offered to run a National Project for enhancement of Aerodrome Safety Oversight Capability to assist in implementing remaining corrective actions based on ICAO Audit recommendations and strengthen the DGCA by providing experts to carry out aerodrome safety oversight functions.

Seat upgradation in domestic flights

†730.SHRI RAJNITI PRASAD: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the procedure for class upgradation in domestic flights;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) the type of passengers for whom the upgradation facility is available and whether recommendation of Member of Parliament or any other officer is required for this;

(c) the officers entitled for class upgradation;

(d) whether they take decision on their own discretion or there is any criterion for this; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (e) Class upgradation in domestic flights is a commercial matter of airlines. Government does not regulate commercial matters of the airlines.

Fuel expenditure and operation cost of flights

†731. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been huge fall in consumer sale price of aviation turbine fuel used in aviation sector from August 2008 to January 2009;

(b) if so, the percentage of such reduction;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the fuel expenditure contributes more than 50 per cent in the operational cost of flights;

(d) if not, the details thereof; and

(e) the reasons for not passing the benefit being earned due to reduction in operational cost to general passenger yet?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir. There has been a fall in the prices of Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) used in aviation sector from August 2008 to January 2009.

(b) There is a reduction of about 55% in the price of fuel from August 2008 to January 2009.

(c) and (d) The percentage of cost attributable to ATF would be different for different airlines based on their business model. As per industry estimates, ATF accounted for 45 to 50% of the operative cost of Indian Carriers when ATF price was at its peak.

(e) Domestic Airlines have reduced the fuel surcharge in the range of Rs.200/- to 400/-. Further,, JetLite, Spicejet, Go Air and IndiGo have abolished the congestion charge.

Catering facility at airports

†732. SHRI PRABHAT JHA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.